



New home construction on Parcel A is seen behind dilapidated buildings on Parcel G at the old Hunters Point Shipyard. (Kevin N. Hume/S.F. Examiner)

State investigation into possible contamination at Shipyard's Parcel A complete, finds no "safety hazards" on hillside site

A survey of a nearby Parcel A-1 was conducted previously and also stamped off as "safe."

LAURA WAXMANN / Apr. 27, 2019 3:00 p.m. / [THE CITY](#)

San Francisco's Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure announced Friday that a state-led effort underway since last fall to retest a hillside parcel of the Hunters Point Shipyard for radioactive contamination has wrapped up, and found no health hazards for nearby residents.

In October, the California Department of Public Health conducted a month-long survey of the area, known as Parcel A-2, that was comprised of a “walkover scan” and “towed array scans” on the hillside, which is currently uncovered and undeveloped.

A survey of a nearby residential area known as Parcel A-1 was conducted previously and also stamped off as “safe” by the department, despite the discovery of a radioactive deck marker last year that was located close to residents’ homes.

Some 10,500 homes are planned at the shipyard, a former U.S. Naval base that has been designated as a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Superfund site due to its long history of radioactive contamination. Its dry docks once served as cleaning stations for ships exposed to atomic tests in the Pacific Ocean, and the former naval base also housed a nuclear warfare research.

The shipyard’s development was halted following reviews by the Navy and U.S. EPA conducted last year that found up to 97 percent of data produced by Tetra Tech EC, the navy-contractor that was largely responsible for the shipyard’s remediation between 2002 and 2016, to be unreliable.

Environmental advocates have called for independent oversight of retesting efforts launched as a result of the allegedly botched cleanup, and a group of homeowners already living on Parcel A-1, the first site to be developed as part of the project, filed a lawsuit in July against Tetra Tech EC and the shipyard’s developers, claiming that they were misled about the extent of the contamination. A total of 439 homes have been built and are largely occupied on Parcel A-1, with 66 more under construction.

Tetra Tech EC and developer Lennar Inc. and its offshoot, Five point Holdings, are also facing a \$27 billion class action lawsuit by Bayview Hunterspoint residents claiming that they have suffered adverse health impacts as a result of fraudulent business practices at the shipyard.

Earlier this year, the U.S. Department of Justice filed a lawsuit against Tetra Tech EC over its work at the shipyard, claiming widespread fraud.

In May, two former Tetra Tech supervisors were sentenced to federal prison after they admitted to falsifying records and swapping out soil samples. The company has denied widespread fraud, and has placed blame on a few “rogue” employees.

Despite lingering concerns and whistleblower accounts of malpractice in the shipyard’s cleanup, the state health department concluded that Parcel A-2 is safe for further development, stating that “only naturally occurring potassium-40” was detected there.

“Potassium-40, which CDPH detected 102 times while scanning, is a naturally occurring element normally found throughout nature, including in plants, animals, various foods and our bodies. CDPH advises that detection of potassium-40 is not unusual for a radiation scan of this type and is not a health or safety concern for people or for the environment,” OCII said in a statement.

Bradley Angel, executive director of Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice, has criticized the scanning of both parcels A-1 and A-2 as insufficient, citing a need to check the soil below resident’s homes, as well as soil removal and independent oversight.

“It’s no surprise that the state department of so-called public health would say everything is fine from their scanning, which is not real testing,” said Angel. “This is the same agency that refused to do core sampling at Parcel A-1, like they refused to do on this current parcel.”

Angel added that CDPH “promised no radioactive waste could possibly be on Parcel A, and when [the deck marker] was found, instead of apologizing they made the bogus claim it was safe. We don’t trust them.”

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